THE
Third and laſt part of Conny-catching.

With the new deuiſed knauiſh arte of Foole-taking.

The like coſnages and Villanies neuer before diſcouered.

By R. G.

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TO ALL SVCH AS HAVE receiued either pleaſure or profite by the two former publiſhed bookes of this Argument:

And to all beſide, that deſire to know the wonderfull ſlie deuiſes of this helliſh crew of Conny-catchers.

IN the time of king Henrie the fourth, as our Engliſh Chronicles haue kept in remembrance, liued diuerſe ſturdie and looſe companions in ſundrie places about the Citie of London, who gaue themſelues to no good courſe of life, but becauſe the time was ſomewhat troubleſome, watched diligently, when by the leaſt occaſion of mutinie offered, they might praie vppon the goods of honeſt Citizens, and ſo by their ſpoyle inrich themſelues. At that time liued likewiſe a worthie Gentleman, whoſe many verie famous deeds (whereof I

am sorie I may here make no rehearsal, because neither time nor occasion will permitte me) renowne his name to all ensuing posterities: he, being called sir Richard Whittington, *the founder of Whittington Colledge in London, and one that bare the office of Lord Maior of this Citie three seuerall times. This worthie man wel noting the dangerous disposition of that idle kinde of people, tooke such good and discreete order (after hee had sent diuers of them to serue in the kings warres, and they loath to doe so well returned to their former vomite) that in no place of or about London they might haue lodging, or entertainment, except they applied themselues to such honest trades and exercises, as might witnesse their maintaining was by true and honest meanes. If any to the contrarie were founde, they were in iustice so sharply proceeded against, as the most hurtfull and dangerous enemies to the commonwealth.*

In this quiet and most blissefull time of peace, when all men (in course of life) should shew themselues most thankfull for so great a benefit, this famous citie is pestered with the like, or rather worse kinde of people, that beare outward shew of ciuill, honest, and gentlemanlike disposition, but in very deed their behauiour is most infamous to be spoken of. And as now by their close villanies they cheate, cosen, prig, list, nippe, and such like tricks now vsed in their Conie-catching *Trade, to the hurt and vndoing of many an honest Citizen, and other: So if God should in iustice be angrie with vs, as our wickednesse hath well deserued, and (as the Lorde forfend) our peace should be molested as in former time,*

euen

euen as they did, ſo will theſe be the firſt in ſeeking domeſticall ſpoile and ruine: yea ſo they may haue it, it skilles not how they come by it. God raiſe ſuch another as was worthie Whittington, *that in time may bridle the headſtrong courſe of this helliſh crew, and force them liue as becommeth honeſt ſubiects; or els to abide the reward of their looſeneſſe.*

By reading this little tratiſe enſuing, you ſhall ſee to what marueilous ſubtil pollicies theſe deceiuers haue atteyned, and how daylie they practiſe ſtrange driftes for their purpoſe. I ſay no more, but if all theſe forewarnings may be regarded, to the benefit of the well minded, and iuſt controll of theſe careleſſe wretches, it is all I deſire, and no more then I hope to ſee.

Yours in all he may

R. G.

The third and last part of Conny-catching with the new deuised knauish Arte of Fooletaking.

BEing by chance inuited to supper, where were pre-sent diuers, both of worship and good accompt, as occasion serued for entercourse of talke, the pre-sent treacheries and wicked deuises of the world was called in question. Amongst other most hatefull and wel worthie reprehension, the woondrous villanies of lose and lewde persons, that beare the shape of men, yet are monsters in condition, was specially remembred, and not onely they, but their complices, their confederates, their base natured women and close compacters were noted: Namely, such as tearme themselues Conny-catchers, Crosse-biters, with their appertaining names to their seuerall cosening qualities, as already is made knowne to the world, by two seuerall imprinted bookes, by meanes wherof, the present kinde of conference was occasioned. Quoth a Gentleman sitting at the Table, whose déepe step into age deciphered his experience, and whose grauitie in spéeche reported his discretion, quoth hee, by the two published bookes of Cony-catching: I haue séene diuers thinges whereof I was before ignorant, notwithstanding had I béene acquainted with the author: I could haue giuen him such notes of notorious matters that way intending, as in neither of the pamphlets are the like set downe. Beside, they are so necessarie to be knowne, as they will both forearme any man against such trecherous vipers, and forewarne the simpler sort from conuersing with them. The Gentleman being knowne to be within commission of the peace, and that what he spake of either came to him by examinati-

ons, or by riding in the circuits as other like officers do: was intreated by one man aboue the rest (as his leisure serued him) to acquaint him with those notes, and he would so bring it to passe, as the writer of the other two bookes, should haue the sight of them, and if they quantitie would serue, that he should publish them as a third, and more necessary part then the former were. The Gentleman replied al such notes as I speake, are not of mine owne knowledge, yet from such men haue I receiued them, as I dare assure their truth: and but that by naming men wronged by such mates, more displeasure would ensue then were expedient, I could set downe both time, place, and parties. But the certaintie shal suffice without any such offence. As for such as shal see their iniuries discouered, and (biting the lip) say to themselues, thus was I made a Conny: their names being shadowed, they haue no cause of anger, in that the example of their honest simplicitie beguiled, may shield a number more endangered from tasting the like. And seeing you haue promised to make them knowne to the author of the former two Bookes, you shall the sooner obtaine your request: assuring him thus much vpon my credit & honestie, that no one vntrueth is in the notes, but euerie one credible, and to be iustified if need serue. Within a fortnight or thereabout afterward, the Gentleman performed his promise, in seuerall papers sent the notes, which here are in our book compiled together when thou hast read, say, if euer thou heardest more notable villanies discouered. And if thou or thy friends receiue any good by thē, as it cannot be but they wil make a number more carefull of themselues: thanke the honest Gentleman for his notes, and the writer that published both the other and these, for generall example.

A pleasant tale howe an honest substantiall Citizen was made a Connie, and simplie entertained a knaue that carried awaie his goods verie politickly.

WHat lawes are vsed among this helish crew, what words and termes they giue themselues and their copesmates, are at large set downe in the former two Bookes: let it suffise yee then in this, to read the simple true discourses of such as haue by extraordinary cunning and treachery béene deceiued, and remembring their subtle meanes there, and slye practises here, be prepared against the reaches of any such companions.

Not long since, a crew of Conny-catchers méeting togither, and in conference laying downe such courses as they seuerally should take, to shunne suspect, and returne a common benefit among them: the Carders receiued their charge, the Dicers theirs, the hangers about the court theirs, the followers of Sermons theirs and so the rest to their offices. But one of them especiallie, who at their wonted mætings, when report was made howe euery purchase was gotten, and by what pollycie each one preuailed: this fellowe in a kinde of priding scorne, would vsually say.

In faithe Maisters these thinges are prettily done, common sleyghts, erpressing no deepe reache of witte, and I woonder men are so simple to bee so beguiled. I would fayne see some rare and artificiall feate indeede, that some admiration and fame might insue the dooing thereof: I promise yee, I disdayne these base and pettie paltries, and may my fortune iumpe with my resolution, yee shall heare my boyes with

in a day or two, that I will accomplish a rare stratagem indeed, of more value then forty of yours, and when it is done shall carry some credit with it. They wondring at his words, desired to see the successe of them, & so dispersing themselues as they were accustomed, left this frollicke fellow pondering on his affaires. A Cittizens house in London, which hee had diligently eyed & aymed at for a fortnights space, was the place wherein he must performe this exploit, and hauing learned one of the seruant maides name of the house, as also where shee was borne and her kindred. Upon a sonday in the afternone, when it was her turne to attend on her maister and mistres to the garden in Finsbury fields, to regard the children while they sported about, this craftie mate hauing dulie watched their comming forth, and seeing that they intended to goe downe S. Laurence lane, stepped before them, euer casting an eye back, least they should turne some contrarie way: but their following still fitting his owne desire, neere vnto the Conduit in Aldermanbury, he crossed the way and came vnto the maid, and kissing her sayd. Coosen Margeret, I am verye glad to see you well, my vncle your father, and all your friends in the Countrey are in good health God be praised. The Maide hearing herselfe named, and not knowing the man, modestly blushed, which hee perceiuing, held way on with her amongst her fellow apprentises, and thus began againe. I see Coosen you knowe mee not, and I doe not greatlie blame you, it is so long since you came foorth of the Countrey, but I am such a ones sonne, naming her Uncle right, and his sonnes name, which she very well remembred, but had not seene him in eleuen yeares. Then taking foorth a bowed groat, and an olde pennie bowed, he gaue it her as being sent from her Uncle and

Aunt,

Aunt, whome hee tearmed to bee his Father and Mother: Withall (quoth he) I haue a Gammon of bacon and a Cheese from my Uncle your Father, which are sent to your Maister and Mistresse, which I receiued of the Carrier, because my Uncle enioynde me to deliuer them, when I must intreat your mistres, that at Whitsontide next shee will giue you leaue to come downe into the Countrey. The Maide thinking simplie all hee said was true, and as they so farre from their parents, are not onely glad to heare of their welfare, but also reioyce to see any of their kindred: so this poore Maid, wel knowing her Uncle had a sonne so named as he called himself, and thinking from a boy (as he was at her leauing the Countrey) he was now growne such a proper handsome young man, was not a little ioyful to see him: beside, shee seemed proud, that her kinsman was so neat a youth, and so shee held on questioning with him about her friends: hee soothing each matter so cunningly, as the maide was confidently perswaded of him. In this time, one of the children stepped to her mother and said, Our Marget (mother) hath a fine cosen come out of the Country, and he hath a Cheese for my Father and you: whereon shee looking backe, said: Maide, is that your kinsman? yes forsooth mistresse quoth shee, my Uncles sonne, whome I left a little one when I came forth of the countrey.

The wilye Treacher, beeing maister of his trade, would not let slippe this opportunitie, but courteouslie stepping to the Mistresse (who louing her maid wel, because indeed shee had been a very good seruant, and from her first comming to London had dwelt with her, tould her husband therof) coyned such a smooth tale vnto them both, fronting it with the Gammon of Bacon and the

Cheese sent from their maides Father, and hoping they would giue her leaue at Whitsontide to visit the countrey, as they with verie kinde words entertained him, inuiting him the next night to supper, when he promised to bring with him the Gammon of Bacon and the Cheese. Then framing an excuse of certaine busines in the town, for that time he toke his leaue of the Maister and Mistresse, and his new Cosen Margaret, who gaue many a loke after him (poore wench) as he went, ioying in her thoughts to haue such a kinsman.

On the morrow hee prepared a good Gammon of bacon, which he closed vp in a soiled linnen cloth, and sewed an old card vpon it, whereon he wrote a superscription vnto the Maister of the Maide, and at what signe it was to be deliuered, and afterward scraped some of the letters halfe out, that it might seeme they had bin rubd out in the carriage. A good Cheese he prepared likewise, with inscription accordingly on it, that it could not be discerned, but that some vnskilfull writer in the countrey had done it, both by the grosse proportion of the letters, as also the bad ortographie which amongst plaine husbandmen is verie common, in that they haue no better instruction. So hiring a Porter to carrie them betweene fiue and sixe in the euening he comes to the cittizens house, and entring the shop, receiues them of the Porter, whome the honest meaning Cittizen would haue paid for his pains, but this his maids new-found Cosen sayd hee was satisfied alreadie, and so straining courtesie would not permit him: well, vp are carried the Bacon and the Cheese, where God knowes, Margaret was not a little busie, to haue al things fine and neat against her Cosens comming vp, her mistresse likewise, (as one well affecting her seruant) had prouided verie

good

good chéere, set all her plate on the Cubbourde for shewe, and beautified the house with Cusheons, carpets, stooles and other deuises of néedle worke, as at such times diuers will do, to haue the better report made of their credite amongst their seruants friends in the Country, albeit at this time (God wot) it turned to theyr owne after-sorrowing. The maister of the house, to delay the time while Supper was readye, bee likewise shewes this dissembler his shop, who séeing things fadge so pat to his purpose, could question of this sort, and that well enough I warrant you, to discern the best frō the worst and their appointed places, purposing a further reache then the honest Cittizen dreamed of: and to bee plaine with ye, such was this occupiers trade, as though I may not name it, yet thus much I dare vtter, that the worst thing he could carry away, was aboue twentie nobles, because hee dealt altogether in whole and great sale, which made this companion forge this kindred and acquaintance, for an hundred pound or twaine was the very least hee aimed at. At length the mistresse sendes word supper is on the Table, whereupon vp hee conducts his guest, and after diuers welcomes, as also thankes for the Chéese and Bacon: To the Table they sit, where let it suffice, hée wanted no ordinarie good fare, wine and other knackes, beside much talke of the Countrey, how much his friends were beholding for his Cosen Margaret, to whome by her mistresse leaue hée dranke twise or thrise, and shée pore soule doing the like againe to him with remembrance of her father and other kindred, which he stil smoothed very cunningly. Countenance of talke made them careles of the time which slipped from thē faster then they were aware of, nor did the deceiuer hasten his departing, because he ex-

pected

pected what indeed followed, which was, that being past tenne of the clocke, and he feigning his lodging to be at Saint Gyles in the field, was intreated both by the goodman and his wife to take a bed there for that night, for fashion sake (though very glad of this offer) hee said he would not troble them, but giuing thē many thanks, would to his lodging though it were further. But wonderfull it was to see how earnest the honest Citizen and his wife laboured to perswade him, that was more willing to staye then they could bee to bid him, and what dissembled willingnesse of departure hee vsed on the other side, to couer the secret villanie intended. Well, at the length with much ado, he is contented to stay, when Margaret and her Mistresse presently stirred to make ready his bed, which the more to the honest mans hard hap, but all the better for this artificial Conny-catcher, was in the same roome where they supped, being commonly called their hall, and there indeed stood a verie faire bed, as in such sightly roumes it may easily bee thought, Citizens vse not to haue any thing meane or simple. The mistresse, least her guest should imagine she disturbed him, suffered all the plate to stand still on the cupbord: and when she perceiued his bed was warmed, and euery thing els according to her mind, she and her husband bidding him good night: tooke themselues to their chamber, which was on the same flooze but inward, hauing another chamber betweene them and the hall, where the maides and children had their lodging. So desiring him to call for any thing hee wanted, and charging Margaret to loke it should bee so, to bed are they gone: when the Apprentises hauing brought vp the keyes of the street doze, & left them in their maisters chamber as they were woont to do, after they had said

prayers

prayers, their euening exercise, to bed go they likewise, which was in a Garret backward ouer their maisters chamber. None are nowe vp but poore Margaret and her counterfeit cosen, whō she loth to offend with long talke, because it waxed late: after some few more speeches, about their parents and friends in the countrey, she seeing him laid in bed, and all such thinges by him as she deemed needfull, with a low courtesie I warrant ye, commits him to his quiet, and so went to bed to her fellowes the maidseruants. Well did this hypocrite perceiue the keyes of the doores carried into the good mans chamber, wherof he being not a litle glad, thoght now they would imagine all things sure, and therfore doutlesse sleep the sounder: as for the keyes, he needed no helpe of them, because such as bee go neuer vnprouided of instruments fitting their trade, & so at this time was this notable trecher. In the dead time of the night when sound sleepe makes the eare vnapt to heare the verie least noyse, he forsaketh his bed, & hauing gotten al the plate bound vp togither in his cloke, goeth down into the shop, where well remembring both the place & percels, maketh vp his pack with some twenty pouds worth of goods more. Then fetling to his engin, he getteth the doore off the hindges, and being forth, lifteth close to againe, and so departs, meeting with in a doozen paces, three or foure of his cōpanions that lurked therabouts for the purpose. Their word for knowing each other, as is said, was Quest, and this villains comfortable newes to them, was Twag, signifying hee had sped: ech takes a fleece for easier carriage, and so away to Bel brow, which as I haue heard is as they interpret it, the house of a theefe receiuer, without which they can do nothing, and this house with an apt porter to it, stands

ready for them al houres of the night: so many such are there in London, the maisters whereof beare countenance of honest substantiall men, but all their liuing is gotten in this order, the end of such (though they scape awhile) will be sailing westward in a Cart to Tiborn. Imagine these villanies there in their iollitie, the one porting point by point his cunning deceipt, and the other (fitting his humour) extolling the deede with no meane commendations. But returning to the honest Citizen, who finding in the morning how deerly he paid for a gammon of bacon, and a cheese, and how his kinde courtesie was thus trecherously requited: blames the poore maide, as innocent herein as himselfe, and imprisoning her, thinking so to regaine his owne: griefe with ill cherishing there shortens her life: And thus ensueth one hard hap vpon another, to the great griefe both of maister and mistresse, when the trueth was knowne, that they so wronged their honest seruant: how it may forewarne others, I leaue to your owne opinions, that see what extraordinarie deuises are now adayes, to beguile the simple and honest liberall minded.

Of a notable knaue, who for his cunning deceiuing a gentleman of his purse: scorned the name of a Conny-catcher, and would needs be termed a Foole-taker, as maister and beginner of that new found Arte.

A Crew of these wicked companions, being one day met togither in Pauls Church (as that is a vsual place of their assemblie, both to determin on their drifts, as also to spead of many a bootie) seeing no likelihood of a good afternoone, so they tearme it either forenoone or after, when ought is to be done: some dispersed themselues to the plaies, other to the bowling allies

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and not paſt two or three ſtayed in the Church. Quoth on of them, I haue vowed not to depart, but ſomething or other Ile haue before I go: my minde giues me, that this place yet will yelde vs all our ſuppers this night. the other holding like opinion with him, there likewiſe walked vp and downe, looking when occaſion would ſerue for ſome Cash. At length they eſpyed a Gentleman towarde the lawe entring in at the little North dooze, and a countrey Client going with him in verye hard talke, the Gentleman holding his gowne open with his armes on eyther ſide as very manie doe, gaue ſight of a faire purple velvet purſe, which was halfe put vnder his girdle: which I warrant you the reſolute fellow that would not depart without ſome thing, had quicklye eſpyed. A game, quoth hee to his fellowes, marke the ſtand, and ſo ſeparating themſelues walked aloofe, the Gentleman going to the nether ſteppe of the ſtaires that aſcend vp into the Quire, and there he walked ſtill with his client. Oft this crew of mates met together, and ſaid there was no hope of nipping the bong becauſe he held open his gowne ſo wide, and walked in ſuch an open place. Baſe knaues, quoth the frolick fellowe, if I ſay I will haue it, I muſt haue it, though hee that owes it had ſwoorne the contrarie. Then loking aſide, hee ſpyed his trugge or queane comming vppe the Church: away, quoth hee to the other, go looke you for ſome other purchaſe, this wench and I are ſuffient for this. They goe, he leſſons the drab in this ſort, that ſhee ſhould to the Gentleman, whoſe name ſhee verye well knew, in that ſhee had holpe to cozen him once before, & pretending to be ſent to him from one he was well acquainted with for his councell ſhould giue him his fee for auoiding ſuſpition, & ſo frame ſome wrong done hir

as well inough she could: when her mate (taking occasion as it serued) would worke the meane, shee should strike, & so they both prevaile. The queane well inured with such courses, because she was one of ỹ most skilful in that profession, walked vp and downe alone in the Gentlemans sight, that he might discerne shee stayed to speake with him, and as he turned toward her, hee saw her take money out of her purse, whereby hee gathered some benefite was toward him: which made him the sooner dispatch his other client, when shee stepping to him, told such a tale of commendations from his verie friend, that had sent her to him as she said, that hee entertained her very kindly, and giuing him his fee, which before her face he put vp into his purse, and thrust vnder his girdle againe: she procéeded to a very sound discourse, whereto he listened with no litle attention. The time seruing fit for the fellows purpose, he came behind the Gentleman, and as many times one friend wil familiarly with another, clap his hands ouer his eyes to make him gueSSe who he is, so did this companion, holding his hands fast ouer the Gentlemans eyes, sayde: who am I: twise or thrise, in which time the drab had gotten the purse and put it vp. The Gentleman thinking it had been some merrie friend of his, reckoned the names of thrée or foure, when letting him go, the crafty knaue dissembling a bashful shame of what he had don, said: By my troth sir I crie ye mercy, as I came in at the Church doore, I tooke ye for such a one (naming a man) a verie friend of mine, whome you very much resemble: I beséech ye be not angrie, it was verie boldlye done of me, but in penance of my fault, so please yee to accept it, I will bestow a gallon or two of wine on yee, and so laboured him earnestly to go with him to the tauerne,

uerne, ſtil alledging his ſorow for miſtaking him. The Gentleman litle ſuſpecting how who am I had handled him, ſeeing how ſorie he was, and ſeeming to be a man of no ſuch baſe condition: toke all in good part, saying: No harme ſir, to take one for another, a fault wherein any man may eaſily erre, and ſo excuſing the acceptation of his wine, becauſe he was buſie there with a gentlewoman his friend: the trecher with courteſie departed, & the drab (hauing what shee would) shortning her tale, bee deſiring her to come to his Chamber the next morning, went to the place where her copeſ-mate and she met, and not long after, diuers other of the crue, who hearing in what manner this act was performed, ſmiled a good therat, that she had both got the Gentlemans purſe, her owne money againe, and his aduiſe for itſt nothing. He that had done this tall exploit, in a place ſo open in view, ſo hardly to be come by, & on a man that made no meane eſteeme of his wit: bids his fellowes kéepe the worthles name of a Conny-catcher to themſelues: for he hence-forth would bee termed a Foole-taker, and ſuch as could imitate this quaint example of his, (which he would ſet down as an entrance into that art) ſhould not thinke ſcorne to become his ſchollers.

Night drawing on apace, the Gentleman returned home, not al this while miſſing his purſe, but being ſet at ſupper, his wife intreated a pint of Sack, which hee minding to ſend for: drewe to his purſe, and ſeeing it gone, what ſtrange lookes (beſide ſighs) were betweene him and his wife, I leaue to your ſuppoſing, and blame them not: for as I haue heard, there was ſeuen pound in gold, beſide thirtie ſhillings and od white money in the purſe. But in the middeſt of his griefe, hee remembred him that ſaid, who am I? Wherewith hee brake

forth into a great laughter, the cause whereof his wife bæing deũrous to know, he declared all that passed betwæn him and the deceiuer, as also how sone afterward the queane abreuiated her discourse and followed: so in troth wife (quoth he) betwæne who am I and the drab, my purse is gone: let his losse teach others to loke better to theirs.

An other Tale of a coosening companion, who would needs trie his cunning in this new inuented arte, and how by his knauerie (at one instant) he beguiled halfe a dozen and more.

OF late time there hath a certaine base kinde of trade bæne vsed, who though diuers poore men, and doubtles honest, apply themselues onely to relieue their need: yet are there some notorious barlets do the same, being compacted with such kinde of people, as this present treatise manifesteth to the world, and what with outward simplicity on the one side, and cunning close treachery on the other, diuers honest Cittizens and day-labouring men, that resort to such places as I am to speake of, onely for recreation as opportunitie serueth, haue beene of late sundry times deceyued of their purses. This trade, or rather vnsufferable loytring qualitie, in singing of Ballets, and songs at the doores of such houses where playes are vsed, as also in open markets and other places of this Cittie, where is most resort: which is nothing els but a slie ketch to drawe many together, who listning vnto an harmelesse dittie, afterwarde walke home to their houses with heauie hearts: from such as are hereof true witnesses to their cost, doo I deliuer this example. A subtill fellow, belike imboldned by acquaintance with the former deceit, or

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els being but a beginner to practise the same, calling certain of his companions together, would try whether he could attaine to be maister of his art or no, by taking a great many of fools with one traine: but let his intent and what els beside, remaine to abide the censure after the mater is heard, and come to Gratious street, where this villanous pranke was performed. A roging mate, & such another with thē were there got vpon a stal singing of balets, which belike was some pretty toy, for very many gathered about to heare it, & diuers buying, as their affections serued, drew to their purses, & paid the singers for them. The slie mate and his fellowes, who were dispersed among them that stood to hear the songs well noted where euerie man that bought, put vp his purse againe, and to such as would not buy, counterfeit warning was sundrie times giuen by the roge and his associate, to beware of the cut-purse, & loke to their purses, which made thē often feel where their purses were, either in sleeue, hose, or at girdle, to know whether they were safe or no. Thus the crafty copesmates were acquainted with what they most desired, and as they were scatred by shouldring, thrusting, feining to let fall something, and other wilie tricks fit for their purpose: here one lost his purse, there another had his pocket picht, & to say all in briefe, at one instant, vpon the complaint of one or two that saw their purses were gone, eight more in the same companie, found themselues in like predicament. Some angrie, others sorrowfull, and all greatly discontented, looking about them, knewe not who to suspect or challenge, in that the villaines themselues that had thus beguiled them, made shew that they had sustained like losse. But one angry fellow, more impacient then all the rest, he falls vpon the ballad singer, and

beating

beating him with his fists well fauouredly, sayes, if he had not listned his singing, he had not lost his purse, and therefore would not be otherwise perswaded, but that they two and the cutpurses were compacted together. The rest that had lost their purses likewise, & saw that so many complaine togither: they iump in opinion with the other fellow, & begin to tug & hale the ballad singers when one after one, the false knaues began to shrink away with the purses, by means of some officer then being there present, the two Roges were had before a iustice, and vpon his discréete examination made, it was found, that they and the cut-purses were compacted together, and that by this vnsuspected villanie, they had deceiued many. The fine Fole-taker himself, with one or two more of that companie, was not long after apprehended: when I doubt not but they had their reward answerable to their deseruing: for I heare of their iorney westward, but not of their returne: let this forewarne those that listen singing in the stréets.

Of a craftie mate, that brought two young men vnto a Tauerne, where departing with a Cup, hee left them to pay both for the wine and Cup.

A Friend of mine sent mee this note, and assuring me the truth thereof, I thought necessary to set it downe amongst the rest: both for the honest simplicitie on the one side and most cunning knauery vsed on the other, and thus it was. Two young men of familiar acquaintance, who delighted much in musicke, because themselues therein were somwhat expert, as on the virginals, bandora, lute and such like: were one euening at a cõmon inne of this town (as I haue heard) where the one of them shewed his skil on the virginals

to

to the no little contentment of the hearers. Now as diuers guests of the house came into the roome to listen, so among the rest entred an artificiall Cony-catcher, who as occasion serued, in the time of ceasing betwéen the seuerall toies and fancies he plaied: very much commended his cunning, quick hand, and such qualities praiseworthy in such a professor. The time being come, when these young men craued leaue to depart, this politique varlet stepping to them, desired that they would accept a quarte of Wine at his hande, which hee would most gladlie bestow vpon them: besides, if it liked him that played on the Virginals to instruct, hee would helpe him to so good a place, as happily might aduantage him for euer. These kind words, deliuered with such honest outward shewe, caused the yong men, whose thoughts were frée from any other opinion, than to bee as truely and plainly dealt withall as themselues meant, accepted his offer, because hee that played on the Virginals was desirous to haue some good place of seruice: ¶ hereupon to the Tauerne they goe, and being set, the wily companion calleth for two pintes of wine, a pinte of white, and a pinte of claret, casting his cloake vpon the table, and falling to his former communication of preferring the yong man. The wine is brought, and two cuppes withall, as is the vsuall manner: when drinking to them of the one pinte, they pledge him, not vnthankfull for his gentlenesse. After some time spent in talke, and as he perceiued fit for his purpose, hee takes the other cup, and tastes the other pinte of wine: wherewith he finding fault, that it dranke somewhat harde, sayd, that Rose-water and Sugar would do no harme: whereupon he leaues his seate, saying he was well acquainted with one of the seruãts of the house, of whom

he could haue two pennyworth of Rose-water for a peny, and so of Sugar likewise, wherefore he would step to the barre vnto him, so taking the cup in his hand, hee did: the yong men neuer thinking on any such treacherie as ensued, in that he seemed an honest man, and beside left his cloake lying on the table by them. No more returnes the vonker with Rose-water and Sugar, but stepping out of doores, vnseene of any, goes away roundly with the cup. The yong men not a little wondering at his long tarrying, by the comming of the seruants to see what they wanted, who take no regarde of his sudden departure, finde themselues there left, not onely to pay for the wine, but for the Cuppe also, being rashlye supposed by the maister and his seruants to be copartners with the treacherous villaine: but their honest behauiour well knowne, as also their simplicity too much abused, well witnessed their innocencie: notwithstanding they were faine to pay for the cup, as afterwarde they did, hauing nothing towardes their charge but a thred bare cloake not worth two shillings. Take héede how you drinke wine with any such companions.

Of an honest housholder which was cunningly deceyued by a subtill companion, that came to hire a Chamber for his Maister.

NOt farre from Charing Crosse dwelleth an honest yong man, who being not long since married, and hauing more rowmes in his house than himselfe occupyeth, either for terme time, or the Court lying so nére, as diuers do, to make a reasonable commoditie, and to ease house-rent, which (as the worlde goeth now is none of the cheapest) letteth forth a chamber or two, according as it may be spared. In an euening

ing but a while since, came one in the manner of a Seruing man to this man and his wife, and he must nedes haue a Chamber for his Maister, offering so largely, as the bargaine was sone concluded betweene them. His intent was to haue fingered some bootie in the house, as by the sequele it may bee likeliest gathered: but belike no fit thing lying abroad, or bee better regarded then happily he would be, his expectation that way was frustrate: yet as a resolute Conny-catcher indeed, that scorneth to attempt without some successe, and rather will pray vpon small commoditye, then returne to his fellows disgraced with a lost labor: he summons his wits together, & by a smooth tale ouer-reached both the man and his wife. He tels them, that his Maister was a captaine late come from the Sea, and had costly apparel to bring thither, which for more easie carriage, he entreats them lend him a sheet to bind it vp in, they suspecting no ill, because he required their boy should goe with him to helpe him cary the stuffe, the good wife steppes vnto her Chest, where her linnen lay sinelie| sweetned with Rose leaues and Lauender, and lends him a very good sheete in deed.

This successe made him bolde to venter a little further, and then he tels them, his maister had a great deale of broken Sugar, and fine spices that lay negligently abroad in his lodging as it was brought from the Ship, all which hee was assured his Maister would bestow on them, so he could deuise how to get it brought thither.

These liberall promises, preuailing with them that lightlie beleeued, and withall were somewhat couetous of the Sugar and spices: The woman demanded if a couple of pillow-beeres would not serue to bring the sugar and spices in? yes marry (quoth hee) so the Sugar

may best be kept by it self, and the spices by themselues. And (quoth hee) because there are many craftie knaues abroad, (grœuing that any should be craftier then himselfe) and in the euening the linnen might quicklie bee snatched from the boy: For the more safety, he would carry the sheet and pillow-beres himselfe, & within an howre or little more, returne with the boy againe, because he would haue all things redy before his maister came, who (as he said) was attending on the Councell at the court. The man and his wife crediting his smoth spœches, sends their boy with him, and so along toward Iuie-bridge go they. The Conny-catcher seeing himselfe at frée libertie, that he had gotten a very good sheet, and two fine pillow-beres: steps to the wall, as though he would make water, bidding the boye goe faire and softly on before. The boy doubting nothing, did as hee willed him, whē presently he stept into some house hard by fit to entertaine him: and neuer since was hes, his Maister, the Sugar, spices, or the linnen heard off. Manie haue beene in this manner deceiued, as I heare, let this then giue them warning to beware of any such vnprofitable guests.

Of one that came to buy a knife, and made first proofe of his trade on him that solde it.

One of the cunning Nippes about the towne, came vnto a poore Cutler to haue a Cuttle made according to his owne minde, and not aboue three inches would he haue both the knife and the haft in length: yet of such pure mettall, as possibly may bee. Albeit the poore man neuer made the like before, yet being promised foure times the value of his stuffe and paines, he was contented to doe this, and the day being

come that hee should deliuer it, the partie came, who liking it excædingly, gaue him the money promised, which the poore man gladly put vp into his purse, that hung at a button hole of his waistcoate before his brest, smiling that he was so well paid for so small a trifle: the partie perceiuing his merry countenance, and imagining he gest for what purpose the knife was, sayde, honest man, whereat smile you? By my troth sir (quoth the Cutler) I smile at your knife, because I neuer made one so litle before: and were it not offensiue vnto you, I would request to know to what vse you will put it to? Wilt thou kæpe my counsaile (quoth the Nip?) yea on mine honestie (quoth the Cutler.) Then hearken in thy eare said the Nip, and so rounding with him, cut the poore mans purse that houng at his bosom, he neuer fæling when he did it: with this knife (quoth the Nippe) meane I to cut a purse, marry GOD forbid (quoth the Cutler) I cannot thinke you to be such a kind of man, I sæ you loue to iest, and so they parted.

The poore man, not so wise as to remember his owne purse, when by such a warning hee might haue taken the offendour doing the dæde, but rather proud (as it were) that his money was so easily earned: walkes to the Alehouse, which was within a house or two of his owne, and finding there thræ or foure of his neighbors with whom he began to iest very pleasantly: sweares by cocke and pie hee would spend a whole groat vppon them, for hee had gotten it and more, clærely by a good bargaine that morning.

Though it was no marueil to sæ him so liberall, because indæde he was a good companion: yet they wer e loth to put him to such cost, notwithstanding he would næds doe it, and so farre as promise stretcht, was pre-

sently fild in, and set vpō the boord. In the drinking time often he wisht to méet with more such customers as he had done that morning, and commended him for a very honest Gentleman I warrant you. At length, when the reckoning was to be paide, hee drawes to his purse, where finding nothing left but a pæce of the string in the button hole, I leaue to your iudgement, whether he was now as sorrie as he was merrie before.

Blanck and all amort sits the poore Cutler, and with such a pittifull countenance, as his neighbours did not a little admire his solemne alteration, and desirous to know the cause thereof, from point to point he discourseth the whole manner of the tragedie, neuer naming his new customer, but with such a farre fetcht sigh, as soule and body would haue parted in sunder. And in midst of all his griefe, he brake forth into these termes. Ile beléeue a man the better by his word while I know him, the knife was bought to cut a purse indéed, and I thanke him for it, hee made the first proofe of the edge with mee. The neighbours gréeuing for his losse, yet smiling at his folly to be so ouerreached, were faine to pay the groate the Cutler called in, because he had no other money about him, and spent as much more beside to driue away his heauinesse.

This tale, because it was somewhat misreported before, vpon talke had with the poore Cutler himselfe, is set downe now in true forme and manner how it was done, therefore is there no offence offered, when by better consideration, a thing may be enlarged or amended, or at least the note be better confirmed. Let the poore Cutlers mishap example others, that they brag not ouer hastily of gaine easily gotten, least they chance to pay as deerely for it, as he did.

Of

Of a yoong Nip that cunningly beguiled an antient professor of that trade, and his queane with him, at a play.

A Good fellow that was newly entered into the nipping craft, and had not as yet attained to any acquaintance with the chiefe and cunning maisters of that trade: In the Christmas holy-dayes last, came to see a playe at the Bull within Bishops gate, there to take his benefit as time and place would permit him. Not long had hee stayed in the preasse, but hee had gotten a yong mans purse out of his pocket, which when he had, hee stepped into the stable to take out the money, and to conuey away the purse. But looking on his commoditie, hee founde nothing therein but white counters, a thimble and a broken three pence, which belike the fellowe that ought it, had doone of purpose to deceiue the cutpurse withall, or else had plaide at the Cardes for counters, and so carried his winnings about him till his next sitting to playe. Somewhat displeased to be so ouertaken, he looked aside, and spied a lustie youth entring at the doore, and his drab with him: this fellow he had heard to bee one of the finest Nippers about the towne, and euer carried his queane with him, for conueiance when the stratagem was performed: he puts vp the counters into the purse againe, and follows close to see some peece of their seruice. Among a companie of seemely men was this lustie companion and his minion gotten, where both they might best beholde the playe, and worke for aduantage, and euer this young Nip was next to him, to marke when he should attempt any exployte, standing as it were more then halfe betweene the cunning Nip and his drab, onely to learne

some

some part of their skill. In short time the deed was performed, but how, the yong Nip could not easily discern, only he felt him shift his hand toward his trug, to conney the purse to her, but she being somwhat mindful of the play, because a merriment was then on the stage, gaue no regarde: whereby thinking he had puld her by the coat, hes twicht the yong Nip by the cloke, who taking aduantage of this offer, put downe his hand and receiued the purse of him: then counting it discourtesie to let him lose al his labour, he softly pluckt the queane by the coate, which shee feeling, and imagining it had beene her companions hand: receiued of him the first purse with the white counters in it. Then fearing least his stay should hinder him, and seeing the other intended to haue more purses ere he departed: away goes the yong Nip with the purse he got so easily, wherin (as I haue heard) was xxvii. shillings and odde mony, which did so much content him, as that he had beguiled so ancient a stader in that profession: what the other thought when he found the purse, and could not gesse howe hee was cosened: I leaue to your censures, onely this makes me smile, that one false knaue can beguile another, which biddes honest men loke the better to their purses.

How a Gentleman was craftily deceiued of a Chayne of Golde and his purse, in Paules Church in London.

A Gentleman of the countrey, who (as I haue herd since the time of his mishap, whereof I am now to speake) had about halfe a yeere before buryed his wife, and belike thinking wel of some other Gentlewoman, whom hee ment to make account of as his second choise: vpon good hope or otherwise perswaded,

hee

he came vp to London to prouide himselfe of such ne-
cessaries as the Countrey is not vsually stored with-
all. Besides, silkes, veluets, cambrickes and such like, he
bought a Chaine of Golde that cost him fiftie and sea-
uen pounds and odde money, whereof because he would
haue the mayden head of first wearing himselfe, hee
presently put it on in the Goldsmiths shop, and so wal-
ked therewith about London, as his occasions serued.
But let not the Gentleman bee offended, who if this
Booke come to his handes, can best auouch the trueth
of this discourse, if heere by the waye I blame his rash
pride, or simple credulitie: for betwéene the one and o-
ther, the Chaine hee paide so déere for about ten of the
clock in the morning, the Cunny catchers the same day
ere night shared amongst them, a matter whereat hee
may well grœue, and I be sorie, in respect hee is my very
good friend: but to the purpose. This Gentleman walk-
ing in Paules, with his Chaine faire glittering about
his necke, talking with his man about some businesse:
was well viewed and regarded by a crewe of Conny-
catchers, whose téeth watred at his goodly Chaine, yet
knew not how to come by it hanging as it did, and ther-
fore entred into secret conspiration among themselues,
if they could not come by all the Chaine, yet how they
might make it lighter by halfe a score ponndes at the
least. Still had they their eyes on the honest Gentle-
man, who little doubted any such treason intended a-
gainst his so late bought bargaine: and they hauing
laid their plot, ech one to be assistant in this enterprise,
saw when the Gentleman dismissed his seruant, to go
about such affaires as hee had appointed him, himselfe
still walking there vp and downe the middle Isle. One
of these mates, that stood most on his cunning in these

 exploits,

eryloytes, followed the seruing man forth of the Church calling him by diuers names, as John, Thomas, William, &c. as though he had knowne his right name, but could not hit on it: which whether he did or no I know not, but wel I wot the seruingman turned back again, and seeing him that called him seemed a Gentleman, booted and cloaked after the newest fashion, came with his hat in his hand to him, saying: Sir, do ye call me? Marie doe I my frend quoth the other, dost not thou serue such a Gentleman? and named one as himselfe pleased. No truely Sir, answered the seruingman, I know not any such Gentleman as you speake of. By my troth replyed thr Conny-catcher, I am assured I knew thee and thy Maister, though now I cannot suddenly remember my selfe. The seruingman fearing no harme, yet fitting the humour of this trecherous companion, tolde right his Masters name whome he serued, and that his Master was euen then walking in Paules. O Gods will (quoth the Cony-catcher, repeating his masters name) a very honest Gentleman, of such a place is he not? naming a shire of the Country: for hee must knowe both name, Country and somtimes what Gentlemen dwell neere the partie that is to bee ouer reached, ere hee can proceed. No in deede Sir (answered the seruingman, with such reuerence as it had beene to an honest Gentleman indeed) my Master is of such a place, a mile from such a Towne, and heard by such a knights house: by which report the deceiuer was halfe instructed, because though he was ignorant of the fellows Master, yet wel he knew the Country, and the knight named. So craning pardon that he had mistaken him, he returnes againe into the Church, and the seruingman trudgeth about his assigned busines. Being come to the rest of

the

the crew, he appointes one of them (whome he knew to be expert in deed) to take this matter in hand, for him self might not do it, least the seruingman should return and know him, he schooled the rest likewise what euery man should do when the pinch came, and changing his cloke with one of his fellowes, walked by himselfe attending the feate: and euery one being as ready, the appointed fellow makes his sally forth, and comming to the Gentleman, calling him by his name, giues him the courtesie and embrace, likewise thanking him for good chéere he had at his house, which he did with such séemly behauiour & protestation, as the Gentleman (thinking the other to be no lesse) vsed like action of kindnesse to him. Now as Country Gentlemen haue many visiters both with neere dwelling neighbours, and freends that iourney from farre, whom they can hardly remember, but some principall one that serues as countenance to the other: so hee not discrediting the cunning mates words, who still at euery point alleaged his kinred to the knight neighbor to the Gentleman, which the poore seruingman had (doubting no ill) reuealed before, and that both there and at his owne house in hawking time with that knight and other Gentlemen of the countrey he had liberally tasted his kindnes: desiring pardon that he had forgotten him, and offered him the curtesie of the citie. The Conny-catcher excused himselfe for that time, saying, at their next meeting hee would bestow it on him. Then seeming to haue espyed his chaine, and commending the fairenes and workemanship thereof: saies, I pray ye sir take a litle counsel of a friend, it may be you will returne thankes for it. I wonder quoth he, you dare weare such a costly Iewell so open in sight, which is euen but a baite to entice bad men to aduen-

ture time and place for it, and no where sooner then in this cittie, where (I may say to you) are such a number of Connycatchers, Cosoners and such like, that a man can scarcely kæpe any thing from them, they haue so many reaches and sleights to beguile withall: which a very especiall frænd of mine found to true not manye dayes since. Hereupon he tolde a very solemne tale, of villanies and knaueries in his own profession, wherby he reported his frænd had lost a watch of gold: shewing how closely his friend wore it in his bosome, and howe straungely it was gotten from him, that the gentleman by that discouerse wared halfe affraid of his chaine. And giuing him many thankes for his good warning, presently takes the Chaine from about his necke, and tying it vp fast in a handkercher, put it vp into his slæue saying. If the Conny-catcher get it hære, let him not spare it. Not a little did the tretcher smile in his slæue, hearing the rashe securitie, but in deede simplicitie of the Gentleman, and no sooner sawe he it put vp, but presently he counted it sure his owne, by the assistance of his complices, that lay in an ambuscado for the purpose: with embraces and courtesies on either side, the Conny-catcher departs, leauing the gentleman walking there still: whereat the crewe were not a little offended, that he still kept in the Church, and would not goe abroad. Well, at length (belike remembring some busines) the Gentleman taking leaue of an other that talked with him, hasted to go forth at the furthest west dore of Paules, which he that had talked with him, and gaue him such counsell perceiuing, hied out of the other dore, and got to the entrance ere hee came foorth, the rest following the gentleman at an inche. As hee was stepping out, the other stept in, and let fall a key, hauing his

his hat so low ouer his eyes, that he could not well discerne his face, and stoping to take vp the keye, kept the Gentleman from going backward or forward, by reason his legge was ouer the threshold. The formost Conny-catcher behind, pretending a quarrell vnto him that stoped, rapping out an oth, and drawing his dagger, saide: Doe I meete the villaine? May, he shall not scape me now, and so made offer to strike him.

The gentleman at his standing vp, seeing it was he that gaue him such good counsaile, and pretended himselfe his verie friend, but neuer imagining this traine was made for him: stept in his defence, when the other following tript vp his heeles: so that hee and his counsellour were downe together, and two more vppon them, striking with their daggers verie eagerly, marry indeed the gentleman had most of the blowes, and both his handkercher with the chaine, and also his purse with three and fiftie shillings in it, were taken out of his pocket in this strugling, euen by the man that himselfe defended.

It was maruellous to behold, howe not regarding the villaines words vttered before in the Church, nor thinking vppon the charge about him (which after hee had thus treacherously lost vnwittingly): he stands pacifying them that were not discontented, but onely to beguile him. But they vowing that they would presently go for their weapons, and so to the field, told the Gentleman he laboured but in vaine, for fight they must and would, and so going downe by Paules Chaine, left the gentleman made a Conny going vp toward Fleetstreet, sorry for his new Counseller and freend, and wishing him good lucke in the fight: which in deede was with nothing but wine pots, for ioy of their late gotten

bottie. Neere to Saint Dunstones church the Gentleman remembred himself, and feeling his pocket so light had suddenly more greefe at his hart, then euer happen to him or any man againe. Backe he comes to see if hee could espye anye of them, but they were farre inough he from him: God send him better hap when he goes next a wooing, and that this his losse may bee a warning to others.

How a cunning knaue got a Truncke well stuffed with linnen and certaine parcels of plate out of a Cittizens house, and how the Master of the house holpe the deceiuer to carry away his owne goods.

WIthin the Cittie of London, dwelleth a worldly man, who hath very great dealing in his trade, and his shoppe very well frequented with customers: had such a shrewd mischance of late by a Conny-catcher, as may well serue for an example to others least they haue the like. A cunning villaine, that had long time haunted this Cittizens house, and gotten many a cheat which he carryed away safely: made it his custome when hee wanted money, to helpe him selfe euer where hee had so often, diuers things he had which were neuer mist, especially such as appertained to the Cittizens trade, but when anye were found wanting, they could not deuise which way they were gone, so pollitiquely this fellow alwayes behaued himselfe, well knew hee what times of greatest businesse this Cittizen had in his trade, and when the shop is most stored with Chapmen: then would he step vp the stares (for there was and is another doore to the house besides that which entreth into the shoppe) and what was next hand came euer away with. One time

aboue

aboue the reſt, in an euening about Candlemas, when day light ſhuts in about fiue of the clocke, hee watched to doe ſome feate in the houſe, and ſéeing the miſtreſſe goe foorth with her maide, the goodman and his folkes very buſie in the ſhop: vp the ſtaires he goes as he was wonte to doo, and lifting vp the latch of the hall portall doore, ſaw no body nére to trouble him, when ſtepping into the nert chamber, where the Cittizen and his wife vſually lay, at the beds fóote there ſtood a handſome truncke, wherein was verye good linnen, a faire gilte Salte, two ſiluer French bowles for Wine, two ſiluer drinking pots, a ſtone Jugge couered with ſiluer, and a dooſen of ſiluer ſpoones. This truncke hee brings to the ſtayres head, and making faſt the doore, againe, drawes it downe the ſteppes ſo ſoftlye as hee could, for it was ſo bigge and heauy, as he could not eaſilie carry it, hauing it out at the doore, vnſéene of anye neighbour or any body elſe, he ſtood ſtrugling with it to lift it vp on the ſtall, which by reaſon of the weight troubled him very much. The goodman comming forth of his ſhop, to bid a cuſtomer or two farwell, made the fellowe affraide he ſhould now bee taken for all togither: but calling his wittes together to eſcape if he could, he ſtode gazing vp at the ſigne belonging to the houſe, as though hee were deſirous to know what ſigne it was: which the Cittizen perceiuing, came to him and aſked him what he ſought for? I looke for the ſigne of the blew bell ſir, quoth the fellowe, where a gentleman hauing taken a chamber for this tearme time, hath ſent me hether with this his Troncke of apparrell: quoth the Citizen I know no ſuch ſigne in this ſtréet, but in the nert (naming it) there is ſuch a one indéed, and there dwelleth one that letteth foorth Chambers to Gentlemen.

Truely

Truely sir quoth the fellowe, thats the house I should goe to, I pray you sir lend me your hand, but to help the Trunck on my back, for I thinking to ease me a while vpon your stall, set it shorte, and now I can hardly get it vp againe. The Cittizen not knowing his owne Trunke, but indeede neuer thinking on any such notable deceite: helpes him vp with the Trunke, and so sends him away roundly with his owne goods. When the Truncke was misst, I leaue to your conceits what housholde greefe there was on all sides, especially the goodman himselfe, who remembring how he helpt the fellow vp with a Trunke, perceiued that heereby hee had beguiled himselfe, and losse more then in haste hee should recouer againe. Howe this may admonish others, I leaue to the iudgement of the indifferent opinion, that see when honest meaning is so craftily beleagerd, as good foresight must bee vsed to preuent such daungers.

How a Broker was cunningly ouer-reached by as craftie a knaue as himselfe, and brought in danger of the Gallowes.

IT hath beene vsed as a common by-word, a craftie knaue needeth no Broker, whereby it should appeare that there can hardlie bee a craftier knaue then a Broker. Suspend your iudgements till you haue heard this Discourse ensuing, and then as you please, censure both the one and the other.

A Ladie of the Countrie sent vp a seruant whome she might well put in trust, to prouide hir of a gowne answerable to such directions as she had giuen him, which was of good price, as may appeare by the outside and lace

lace, whereto doubtlesse was euerie other thing agreeable: for the Tayler had seuentéen yards of the best black satten could be got for monie, and so much golde lace, beside spangles, as valued thirtéene pound, what else was beside I know not, but let it suffice, thus much was lost, and therefore let vs to the manner how.

The satten and the lace being brought to the Tayler that should make the gowne, and spread abroade on the shop boord to be measured, certaine good fellowes of the Conny-catching profession chanced to go by, who séeing so rich lace, and so excellent good satten, began to commune with themselues how they might make some purchase of what they had séene: and quickly it was to bée done or not at al. As euer in a crew of this quality, there is some one more ingenious and politique then the rest, or at least wise that couets to make himselfe more famous then the rest: so this instant was there one in this companie that did sweare his cunning should deceiue deceiue him, but he would haue both the lace and satten. When hauing laid the plot with his companions, how and which waie their helpe might stand them in stead, this they proceéded.

Well noted they the seruing-man that stood in the shoppe with the Tailer, and gathered by his diligent attendance, that he had some charge of the gowne there to be made, wherefore by him must they worke their trecherie intended, and vse him as an instrument to beguile himselfe. One of them sitting in a seate nere vnto the Tailers stall, could easily heare the talke that passed betwéene the seruing-man and the Tayler, where among other communication, it was concluded that the gowne should be made of the selfe same fashion in euery point, as another Ladies was who then lay in the citie,

and that measure being taken by her, the same would fitlie serue the Lady for whome the gowne was to bee made: now the seruingman intended to go speake with the Ladie, and vppon a token agreed betweene them (which he carelesse spake so lowd, that the Conny-catcher heard it) he would as her leisure serued, certifie the Tailer, and he should bring the stuffe with him, to haue the Ladies opinion both of the one and the other.

The seruingman being gone about his affaires, the subtill mate that had listned to all their talke, acquaints his fellows both with the determination and token appointed for the Tailers comming to the Lady. The guide and leader to all the rest for villany, though there was no one but was better skilde in such matters then honestie: he appoints that one of them should go to the tauerne, which was not farre off, & laying two fagots on the fire in a roome by himselfe, and a quarte of wine filled for countenance of the treacherie: another of that crue should giue attendance on him, as if hee were his maister, being bare headed, and sir humblie answering at euery word. To the tauern goes this counterfet gentleman, and his seruant waiting on him, where euery thing was performed as is before rehearsed. When the master knaue calling the drawer, demanded if there dwelt neere at hand a skilfull Tailer, that could make a suite of veluet for himselfe, marry it was to be doone with very great speed.

The Drawer named the Tailer that we now speake of, & vpon the drawers commending his cunning, the man in all hast was sent for to a gentleman, for whō he must make a sute of veluet forthwith. Vpon talke had of the stuffe, how much was to be bought of euery thing appertayning thereto: he must immediatly take measure

ſure of this counterfet gentleman, becauſe he knew not when to returne that waye againe, afterward they would go to the Mercers. As the Tailer was taking meaſure on him bare headed, as if he had bin a ſubſtantiall gentleman indeed, the craftie mate had cunningly gotten his purſſe out of his pocket, at the one ſtring whereof was faſtened a little key, and at the other his ſignet ring: This bootie he was ſure of all readie, whether he ſhould get any thing els or no of the miſchiefe intended, ſtepping to the windowe he cuts the ring from the purſſe, and by his ſuppoſed man (rounding him in the eare) ſendes it to the plot-layer of this knauerie, minding to traine the tailer along with him, as it were to the mercers, while he the meane time tooke order for the other matter. Afterward ſpeaking alowde to his man, ſirrha, quoth hee, diſpatch what I bad you, and about foure of the clock meet me in Paules, by that time I hope the tailer and I ſhall haue diſpacht. To Cheapſide goeth the honeſt Tailer with this notorious diſſembler, not miſſing his purſſe for the ſpace of two houres after, in leſſe then halfe which time the ſatten and golde lace was gotten likewiſe by the other villain from the Taylers houſe in this order.

Being ſure the Tayler ſhould bee kept abſent, hee ſends another mate home to his houſe, who abuſed his ſeruants with this deuiſe: that the ladies man had met their maſter abroad, and had him to the other Ladie to take meaſure of her, and leaſt they ſhould delaye the time too long, hee was ſent for the ſatten and lace, declaring the token appointed, and withall giuing their maſters ſignet ring for better confirmation of his meſſage, The ſeruants could doe no leſſe then deliuer it, being commanded (as they ſuppoſed) by ſo credible teſtimony:

neither did the leasure of anie one serue to goe with the the messenger, who seemed an honest young Gentleman and carried no cause of distrust in his countenaunce: wherefore they deliuered him the lace and satten folded vp together as it was, and desired him to will their master to make some speede home, both for cutting out of worke, and other occasions.

To a Broker fit for their purpose, goes this deceiuer with the satten lace, who knowing well they could not come honestly by it, nor anie thing else hee bought of that crew, as often before he had dealt much with them: either gaue them not so much as they would haue, or at least as they iudged they coulde haue in another place, for which the ring-leader of this coosnage, vowed in his mind to be reuenged on the Broker. The master knaue who had spent two houres and more in vaine with the Tailer, and would not like of anie veluet he saw, when he perceiued that he mist his purse, and could not deuise how or where he had lost it, shewed himselfe verie sorrie for his mishap, and sayd in the morning he woulde send the veluet home to his house, for he knew where to speed of better then anie he had seene in the shops. Home goes the Tailer verie sadly, where he was entertained with a greater mischance, for there was the Ladies seruingman swearing and stamping, that he had not sen their master since the morning they parted, neither had hee sent for the satten and lace, but when the seruantes iustified their innocencie, beguiled both with the true token rehearsed, and their masters ring, it exceedeth my cunning to set downe answerable wordes to this exceeding griefe and amazement on their part, but most of al the honest Tailer, who sped the better by the Brokers wilfulnes, as afterward it happened, which made him

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the better brooke the lesse of his purse. That night all meanes were vsed that coulde bee, both to the Perrers, brokers, goldsmiths, goldsmers, & such like, where happily such thinges doe come to bee selde: but all was in vaine, the onely helpe came by the inventer of this villanie, who scant sleeping all night, in regard of the brokers extreme gaining, both by him and those of his profession: the next morning he came to the Tailers house, at what time hee espied him with the Ladies seruingman, comming forth of the doores, and into the tauern he went to report what a mishap hee had vpon the sending for him thether the daie before.

As he was but newly entered his sadde discourse, in comes the partie offended with the broker, and hauing heard all (whereof none could make better report than himselfe) he takes the tailer and seruing-man aside, and pretending great griefe for both their causes, demands what they would thinke him worthy of that could help them to their goods againe. On condition to meete with such a friend, offer was made of fiue pound, and after sundrie speeches passing betweene them alone, he seeming that he would worke the recouerie thereof by arte, and they promising not to disclose the man that did thē good, he drew forth a little booke out of his bosome, whether it was latine or english it skilled not, for hee coulde not reade a word on it, then desiring them to spare him alone a while, they shoulde perceiue what hee woulde doe for them. Their heartes encouraged with some good hope, kept all his wordes secret to themselues: and not long had they sitten absent out of the roome, but he called thē in againe, and seeming as though he had bene a scholler in deed, sayd he found by his figure that a broker in such a place had their goods lost, and in such a place of the

house they should finde it, bidding them go thether with all spæd, and as they found his wordes, so (with reserving to themselues how they came to knowledge therof) to mæt him there againe in the euening, and reward him as he had deserued.

Awaie in hast goes the Tailer and the seruing-man, and entering the house with the Constable, found them in the place where hee that reueald it, knew the broker alwaie laid such gotten goods. Of their ioy againe, I leaue you to coniecture, and thinke you sée the broker with a good paire of bolts on his hæles, readie to take his farewell of the worlde in a halter, when time shall serue. The counterfet cunning man, and artificial conny-catcher, as I heard, was paide his fiue pounde that night. Thus one craftie knaue beguiled another, let each take hæd of dealing with anie such kind of people.

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